

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 L-03 MCE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 IGA-02 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3935
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HQ USAF WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
JUSMAGG
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 11684

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PARM, GR, TU
SUBJECT: F-16 AIRCRAFT FOR GREECE

REF: (A) ATHENS 10133 (071515Z NOV 77), (B) STATE 275309
(170026Z NOV 77), (C) STATE 281173 (240028Z NOV 77) ALL NOTAL

1. REFTELS CONCERN GREEK INTEREST IN PURCHASING F-16 AIRCRAFT. AS INDICATED IN REF A, IN JULY 1977, A USAF BRIEFING TEAM PROVIDED THE HELLENIC AIR FORCE (HAF) PLANNING AND BUDGETARY (P&B) DATA FOR 40 F-16 AIRCRAFT. SINCE THEN, NO OFFICIAL HAF REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR A LETTER OF OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE (LOA) HAVE BEEN NOTED, ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN PERIODIC CONTACTS IN ATHENS BETWEEN THE HAF AND REPRESENTATIVES OF GENERAL DYNAMICS. THE HAF HAS NOW INDICATED RENEWED INTEREST IN THE F-16. ACTION REQUESTED: SEE PARA 5.

2. A RECENT LETTER FROM THE HAF LOGISTICS DIVISION CHIEF TO JUSMAGG CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS PARAPHRASED AT SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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LENGTH TO INDICATE THEIR SCOPE:

A. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO THE USAF F-16 BRIEFING TO THE HAF IN JULY, WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT THE HAF "IS INTERESTED" IN F-16 AIRCRAFT. IT IS EVIDENT THAT DUE TO ITS MULTIPLE ROLE, SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, THE F-16 WILL MEET THE AIR FORCE REQUIREMENTS OF MANY NATO COUNTRIES IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS.

B. TO CLARIFY SOME POINTS ON THE F-16, YOU ARE REQUESTED TO PROVIDE US THE FOLLOWING SUPPLEMENTAL DATA:

(1) THE INITIAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE F-16 DO NOT INCLUDE A CAPABILITY FOR RADAR GUIDED AIR-TO-AIR MISSILES (SPARROWS). WE REQUEST INFORMATION ON WHETHER THIS CAPABILITY CAN BE INCLUDED AND THE COST OF THE REQUIRED MODIFICATION.

(2) WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE AIRCRAFT ENGINE HAS A HIGH STALL RATE (3.2 PER 1000 HRS). WE REQUEST INFORMATION ON ANY EXISTING PROGRAMS TO CORRECT THIS PROBLEM, HOW MUCH IMPROVEMENT IS ANTICIPATED, AND WHAT COSTS ARE INVOLVED.

(3) THE COST OF AIRCRAFT SUPPORT APPEARS HIGH (OVER 50PER CENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM COST). WE REQUEST INFORMATION ON THE FACTORS THAT MAKE THE SUPPORT COST "EXTREMELY HIGH".

(4) WE REQUEST INFORMATION ON THE POSSIBILITIES FOR GREECE TO SHARE IN THE CO-PRODUCTION PROGRAM OF THIS AIRCRAFT AND UNDER WHAT TERMS, BECAUSE "IT HAS BEEN OUR POLICY SINCE THE HELLENIC AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES WERE ESTABLISHED TO PARTICIPATE IN FUTURE AIRCRAFT PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS REGARDING THEIR MANUFACTURE, AS IT APPLIES TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WHICH PROCURE THE F-16."

C. WE THEREFORE REQUEST INFORMATION ON THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF A PROGRAM WHICH WILL BE PAID OFF GRADUALLY. THIS INFORMATION IS REQUIRED "SINCE WE WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER OUR POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN THE F-16 PROGRAM IN THE NEAR FUTURE" BY BEING PROVIDED TWO SQUADRONS OF F-16'S (32 F-16A'S AND EIGHT F-16B'S). THE 40 AIRCRAFT WILL OPERATE FROM A MAIN BASE AND A DISPERSAL BASE FLYING APPROXIMATELY 25 HRS PER MONTH PER AIRCRAFT. DELIVERIES
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WOULD BE IN ABOUT 1982 - 1983.

D. YOUR PROMPT REPLY WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED SINCE WE WOULD THEN BE ABLE TO PROCEED FURTHER AND MAKE A DECISION ON THE WHOLE PROGRAM.

3. COMMENT: ALL OF THE ABOVE SUBJECTS WERE ADDRESSED AND AT LEAST PARTIALLY ANSWERED DURING THE JULY USAF BRIEFING. AT THAT TIME, HAF INTEREST IN THE F-16 APPEARED MINIMAL, AND IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT NO HAF GENERAL OFFICERS ATTENDED ANY PORTION OF THE PRESENTATION. CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF GREEK PARTICIPATION IN CO-PRODUCTION OF THE AIRCRAFT, IT IS OUR JUDGMENT THAT THE GREEKS LACK THE NECESSARY FACILITIES AND TECHNICAL BASE TO PARTICIPATE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY IN CO-PRODUCTION. THIS WILL STILL BE TRUE EVEN AFTER THE HELLENIC AEROSPACE INDUSTRIES BEGIN OPERATIONS.

4. IT APPEARS LIKELY THAT THE RENEWED HAF INTEREST MAY LEAD TO A REQUEST FOR AN LOA SOME TIME IN CY 78. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THIS LATEST REQUEST MAY HAVE SOME RELATION TO REF C AND COULD BE A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY ATTEMPT BY THE GREEKS TO DETERMINE U.S. INTENTIONS ON AN F-16 SALE TO GREECE. IN ANY CASE, ALTHOUGH REF B STATED THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT ENCOURAGE AN F-16 SALE TO GREECE AT THIS TIME, WE BELIEVE SOME RESPONSE MUST BE

PROVIDED TO THIS LATEST REQUEST FOR INFORMATION.

5. REQUEST ANSWERS/GUIDANCE ON WHICH TO BASE A RESPONSE TO
THE HAF.
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